

# *Tips for Parents and Caregivers*

## *National Child Health Day:*

### *A Chance to Nurture Children's Mental Health*

National Child Health Day, the first Monday in October, is an occasion for all of us to focus on the health and development of our nation's children. But it's not just *physical* health and development that are important. *Mental* health is crucial to the development of children and must be as closely nurtured, year-round, as other aspects of their health. Approximately one in every five young people in the United States has a mental health challenge. Early detection of mental health difficulties is key to reducing the pain caused to children—and the costs sustained by their families and communities.

#### **Pay attention if a child you know:**

- **Is troubled and feeling very sad, anxious, angry, or frightened;**
- **Experiences big changes in school performance, in sleeping or eating habits, or loses interest in things usually enjoyed;**
- **Is limited by poor concentration, inability to sit still or focus, persistent nightmares, or performs certain routines dozens of times a day;**
- **Behaves in ways that cause problems, often hurts other people, destroys property or breaks things.**



These could be warning signs of a mental health problem. Parents, teachers and caregivers should learn these warning signs so that they can recognize potential problems and get help for a child who needs it.

The *Caring for Every Child's Mental Health* Campaign is part of The Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program of the Federal Center for Mental Health Services. Parents and caregivers who wish to learn more about mental well-being in children, please call 1.800.789.2647 (toll-free) or visit the Web site at [www.mentalhealth.org/child](http://www.mentalhealth.org/child) to download a free publications catalog (CA-0000). The Federal Center for Mental Health Services is an agency of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.